

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7541

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 5385

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR,PFOR, BL CI PE

SUBJECT: BOLIVIA'S QUEST FOR ACCESS TO THE SEA

1. A RELIABLE SOURCE HAS INFORMED ME THAT BOLIVIA HAS BEEN ACTIVELY NEOGTIATING WITH CHILE AND WITH PERU OVER THE SUBSTANCE OF CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES EXPECTED ON THE OCCASION OF THE AQGUNG ANNIVERSARY OF BOLIVIA'S INDEPENDENCE. IN THE CASE OF CHILE, THE BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES ARE SEEKING TO HAVE PRESIDENT PINOCHET INCLUDE AS POSITIVE A STATEMENT AS POSSIBLE ON CHILE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MAKING AN ARRANGEMENT WITH BOLIVIA FOR ACCESS TO THE SEA. IN THE CASE OF PERU, THE BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES ARE EARNESTLY STRIVING TO OBTAIN FROM PRESIDENT VELASCO A RENUNCIATION OF PERU'S RIGHT OF VETO OVER ANY TERRITORIAL ADJUSTMENT AS PROVIDED IN THE 1929 TREATY BETWEEN PERU AND CHILE. THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE HAVING ROUGH SLEDDING, ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE.

2. THE SAME BOLIVIAN INDIVIDUAL HAS REPORTED THAT DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS, THE GOB HAS PESENTED THREE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE FOR A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF AN ACCESS TO THE SEA. ALL THREE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN REJECTED. THERE IS NOW GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE BOLIVIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY, ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE. THIS
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FEELING HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY PRES. BANZER'S RECENT STAT-

MENT THAT HE FELT THAT BY 1980 BOLIVIA COULD OBTAIN A RESOLUTION TO ITS PROBLEM. FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES REPORTEDLY FEEL THAT PRESIDENT BANZER HAS TAKEN THE PRESSURE OFF CHILE AT A CRUCIAL TIME.

3. SOURCE ALSO REPORTS THAT YOUNG BOLIVIAN ARMY OFFICERS ARE WATCHING CLOSELY BANZER'S HANDLING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHILE FOR ACCESS TO THE SEA. HE BELIEVES THAT THERE IS A GROWING IMPATIENCE AND THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 1980 OUTSIDE DATE FOR RESOLUTION WILL NOT SIT WELL WITH THESE YOUNG OFFICERS. HE NOTES FURTHERMORE THAT ON OR ABOUT AUG. 20, THE 4 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF PRESIDENT BANZER'S TAKE-OVER OF THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT, THERE WILL RISE A CHORUS OF REQUESTS THAT BANZER GET OUT, BASED ON A GENERAL DISLIKE FOR "CONTINUISMO." IT IS NOW REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT BANZER HAS UNDER CONSIDERATION THE INCLUSION OF CIVILIANS IN HIS CABINET SO AS TO UNDERCUT THE FEELING THAT AN ALL-MILITARY GOVERNMENT UNDER PRESIDENT BANZER SHOULD NOT CONTINUE AFTER THE DATE OF THE REVOLUTION.

4. WE TEND TO ACCEPT AS PROBABLY TRUE THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPHS ONE AND TWO. THE SITUATION AS DESCRIBED IN PARA THREE IS SOMEWHAT DOUBTFUL IN OUR VIEW. PRESIDENT BANZER APPEARS TO HAVE ROOM FOR MANEUVERING AND CONTINUES TO DISPLAY ADEQUATE POLITICAL SKILL IN SURVIVING IN OFFICE. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED, HOWEVER, TO SEE SOME SHIFT IN THE MILITARY HIGH COMMAND AND IN THE CABINET FOLLOWING THE AUGUST 6 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION.
STEDMAN

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